

THE FACTORS INFLUENCING ON PURCHASE INTENTION OF THAI AND CHINESE CUSTOMERS TOWARDS THE HOTEL INDUSTRY IN BANGKOK, THAILAND

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ABSTRACT: *This study aimed to examine the factors influencing on purchase intention of Thai and Chinese customers towards the hotel industry in Bangkok, Thailand. This research adopted descriptive research method which aimed to describe the target population and variables. The researcher applied nonprobability sampling as a sampling technique and collected the data through questionnaires with 400 respondents. The questionnaire were implemented in English language collected from tourist who stay at hotel in the top three rankings of hotel area in Bangkok (Pathum Wan district, Phra Nakhon district and Watthana district). A statistical software was used to test the data. Variables are measured by a five-point Likert scale. The first two hypothesis were tested by Multiple Linear Regression and other two hypothesis were tested by Independent sample t-test. Summary of the results, the findings of the conceptual model revealed that eWOM affected loyalty and purchase intention as shown in the results of hypothesis one and two.*

Keywords: *Brand Attitude, Customer satisfaction, Electronic word-of - mouth (eWOM), Loyalty, Purchase Intention, Reputation, Trust*

Introduction & Statement of Problem

Thailand enjoys a good location in the Asia Pacific region, benefiting from familiarity to key source markets and offering a broad range of regional and global travel connections variety of tourist lifestyles can be Thailand. With geography of Thailand, Northern part with highlands and in the East and the South with oceans. It has various of diverse natural attractions and cultures. Thailand is the place that fits with tourists who are enthusiastic about ancient civilizations and culture.

Moreover, it has long and rich traditions and history such as Thai arts, architecture, and craftsmanship. In the part of tourist facility, Thailand is a tourist-friendly country, with good technology and accommodations (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2019). In the Asia Pacific region, Thai tourism industry is one of the best well-established tourism markets in the world (Thailand tourism report, 2018). With strong growth potential and long-established reputation, the tourism industry in Thailand is well developed with resilient reputation. Most popular cities in Thailand including Bangkok and Phuket, the hotel market is competitive and diverse. With support from government and rising visitor numbers, Thailand continues to attract investor interest with hotel developers, despite challenges such as labor market restrictions and an uncertain political climate. Thailand has a range of attractions to suit a variety of budgets providing considerable value for money compared to other countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Including eco-tourism activities, cultural

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and nightlife attractions of Bangkok. A variety of festivals, exhibitions, and sporting events are held year-round. Moreover, Thailand is also building its reputation as a golfing and sailing destination. Tourists can visit throughout the year, including the rainy season. Even with seasonal slumps, occupancy rates and returns are quite steady (Thailand tourism report, 2018).

The purpose of this research is to examine model investigating factors affecting the purchase intention of customers towards the context of hospitality services in Bangkok. In general, many factors are supported by empirical evidence, however the researcher focused on Trust, customer satisfaction, eWOM, reputation, brand attitude and loyalty.

Trust

Trust explains as customer's belief that a company or brand will provide their need and not provide unexpected action in negative ways or outcome (Anderson and Narus, 1990). In social exchange theory, trust is required as an element of the relationship between buyer and seller which works in marketing and other disciplines (Blau, 1964).

Customer Satisfaction

Parasuraman, 1997; Ravald and Grönroos, (1996) defined customer satisfaction as a customer comparison between expectation of customer and the perceived level of goods and services. Satisfaction is seen as a foregoing of loyalty. Moreover, Anderson, Fornell, & Lehmann (1994, p.55) state that 'It has been defined as their preference and favorable attitudes toward consumption experiences'. Groth and Grandey (2012, p.55) found that the relationship between frontline employees influence customer satisfaction. Researcher found that dissatisfied customer services did not meet their expectations.

Once they are dissatisfied service or product, customers can stop to use the service or provide feedback to the company.

Loyalty

When a customer is satisfied with goods and services, customer loyalty occurs (Demir, Talaat and Aydinli, 2015). Loyal customers express an intended behavior related to the product and services of the company. Customer loyalty possibility of repurchasing product or renew service contracts in the future with the company. So, it may higher barriers switching to the competitors and recommendation to other people. Dick and Basu (1994) assume true customer loyalty is based on the positive relative of customer attitudes with brand evaluation. Bowen and Chen, (2001) explained customer loyalty is measured by behavioral, attitudinal and composite methods. The frequency of repurchase or volume shows behavioral loyalty but does not the related motivation of purchasing behaviors (Riley, Niinine, Szivas and Wills, 2001).

Purchase Intention

Tariq, Nawaz, and Butt, (2013) implied purchase intention that customers will promise to themselves to buy products or services with the same company again. Purchase intention is important for a company or brand as it shows the impression of customer retention. In addition, Huarng, Yu, & Huang, (2010) referred to Purchase intention that advertisements media affected to the customer plan to buy a product or services. It explains the purchase of products or services as matching between advertisement and consumer behavior (Kamins, 1990). Moreover, it is used in advertising impact assessments to measure the online purchase (Brown, Broderick and Lee, 2007) and repurchase.

Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM)

Brown et al., (2007) defined Word-of-mouth (WOM) marketing is a tool to investigate both online and offline channels. It's an effect on brands, buying behavior and company. By the way, Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) come about across various online communities to communicate with online consumer interactions which were supported by Dwyer, Hiltz, and Passerini (2007). It is shown that eWOM influence on evaluation and purchase intention on social media networks. Litvin, Goldsmith and Pan (2008) explained eWOM also talk about online recommendations, online reviews or online comment that is important with the new technology tools. Zhu, and Zhang (2010, p. 140) that eWOM as "all informal communications directed at consumers through Internet based technology related to the usage or characteristics of particular goods and services, or their sellers." According to eWOM is more speed of interaction, more convenience, and can reach information to many channels without face to face communication than traditional Word of mouth. So, Electronic word-of-mouth is more influence than traditional word-of-mouth (Sun, Youn, Wu and Kuntaraporn, 2006).

Reputation

Fombrun and Van Riel, 2002; Schultz, (2006) state that 'Reputation is judged within the context of competitive offerings. Customers perceived more trustworthy and credible of a company with a good reputation. Moreover, a company and brand with a good reputation attract more new customers and retain current ones. It is a core intangible asset of the company and creates barriers to competitive firms. Brand reputation refers to how the brand is viewed and valued by customers. A positive brand reputation means customers trust the company and want to buy goods or services. It also has

been defined as a perception of quality with the name. Zeithaml, (1998) suggests that the perceived quality of goods or services are related to the reputation of the brand name. In some situation, customers will relate the goods or services with the brand reputation (i.e. Pepsi, BMW, Park Hyatt, InterContinental, McKinsey, etc.). So, the reputation of the company individual goods or services. brand appears to have connected with reputation of the company.

Brand Attitude

Mitchell and Olson (1981), defined consumer's attitudes toward a brand in a positive or negative way. It is customer emotional and recognition aspects of the company's brand. Moreover, (Bibby, 2006; Grimm, 2005; Rossiter, Percy and Donovan, 1991) defined Brand attitude as a response the customer has towards the brand. Four types of decision-making processes can clarify what the customer's mental action (cognition) and experience (affect) about the brand, what the mental faculty of purpose or will to perform an action (conation), how strong feelings are (attitude valence and stability) and how quickly does customer can be recalled (attitude accessibility).

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Conceptual Framework

This proposed conceptual framework (Figure 1) was structured based on the first research model which was constructed by Chaang-Iuan and Pie-Chun (2015) who studied the influence of the blogs effective to maintain customer relationship in travel industry. The researcher had utilized seven variables which are interactivity, information quality, entertainment, E-trust, E-satisfaction, E-loyalty, and purchase intention. Furthermore, to confirm the relationships in the proposed model of Chaang-Iuan & Pie-

Chun (2015) which eventually excluded eWOM and reputation, the researcher decided to add-on two variables by adapting the model proposed byntoni José, and Fabiana, (2018). Moreover, the researcher decided to add one more variable which is brand attitude that supporting from the model of Chetna and Amresh, (2017).

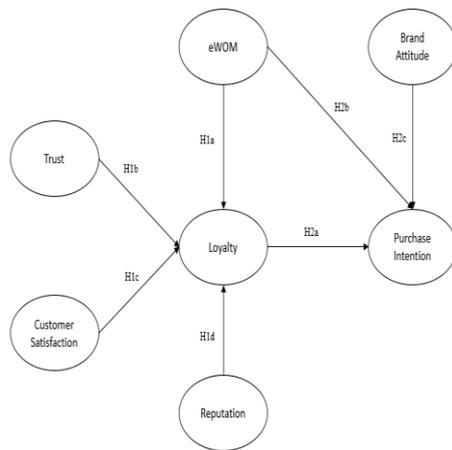


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Hypotheses

H1_a: Trust, customer satisfaction, eWOM and reputation significantly influences customer loyalty toward hospitality services in Bangkok.

H2_a: eWOM, brand attitude and loyalty significantly influence purchase intention toward hospitality services in Bangkok.

H3_a: There is significant mean difference between Thais tourists and Chinese tourists on loyalty towards hospitality services in Bangkok.

H4_a: There is significant mean difference between Thais tourists and Chinese tourists on purchase intention towards hospitality services in Bangkok.

Research Methodology

This researcher selected questionnaire option to collect result of respondents who provided a representative sample of the population, applicable to this topic. Therefore, the researcher conducted

a survey method by distributing both online and offline questionnaires to gather data from respondents. Apart from using questionnaire, the researcher applied a sample survey of 400 prospects representative of the population. A self-administrative survey is distributed in order for the respondents complete all questions by themselves. The questionnaire includes nine parts. The first part is the screening questions. The second part is survey independent variable about eWOM. The third part examines independent variable about Trust. The forth part survey independent variable about Customer satisfaction. The fifth part studied independent variable about reputation. The sixth part is measuring independent variable about brand attitude. The seventh part is the measuring mediating variable about loyalty. The eighth part measuring the dependent variable about purchase intention. The last part is the questions about the respondent's demographic profile.

Measurement of variables

The target respondents of this research are customers who have visited a hotel in Bangkok at least once. The study will be conducted in Bangkok, Thailand.

Population and samples

The researcher applied 400 respondents as the sample size to study the impact of variable toward hotel industry in Bangkok, Thailand. The target population of this study consisted of 2 groups categorized by the nationality; Thai tourists and international tourists. Moreover, the population were those who visited lodging in Bangkok, Thailand for more than one night. According to the research conducted by Yuan and McDonald (1990) research, nationality-based studied in tourism show that tourists differ on perceived destination image and attitudes travel patterns, motivation and communication styles.

Therefore, the researcher collected the data of target population of this study from tourist who travelled and stayed hotels in Bangkok, Thailand.

Reliability Test

To examine further whether the questionnaire was proper for a large number of prospects, the researcher decided to test the variable reliability by the use of Cronbach's alpha or the coefficient alpha as suggested by Hair et al. (2003). The coefficient alpha is considered as acceptable when it is greater than 0.6 and can be used as a research instrument (Sekaran, 2003).

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha
eWOM	0.729
Trust	0.611
Customer satisfaction	0.662
Reputation	0.617
Brand attitude	0.698
Loyalty	0.617
Purchase intention	0.674

Table 1 show the outcome of reliability test of each variable used in this study. All of variables proposed in this research have the range of coefficient alpha more than 0.6. This means all variables used in the research are reliable and can be implemented as the instrument of this study.

Result and Discussion

Descriptive Analysis of Demographic Characteristics

Table 2 illustrates most respondents in this research. The result posits that the major respondents are Thai single female with 18-25 years old who are employee and

had income between 20,001- 50,000 baht per month.

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis of Demographic Characteristics

Variables	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Marital status		
- Single	292	73
- Married (with children)	58	14.5
- Married (without children)	45	11.3
- Others	5	1.3
Income level (per month)	106	26.5
-Under 20,000 Baht	201	50.2
-20,001 – 50,000 Baht	67	16.8
-50,001 - 100,000 Baht	26	6.5
-More than 100,000 Baht		Continued/...
Occupation		
- Business owner	106	26.5
- Employee	145	36.6
- Student	69	17.3
- Professional (e.g. Lecturer, Engineer, Doctor)	70	17.5
- Others	10	2.5
Nationality		
- Thai	200	50
- Chinese	200	50
Total	400	100

Inferential Analysis

Inferential statistics is a statistics tool to analyze the characteristics from sample to a population. Hypothesis testing is the use of statistics to determine the probability that a given hypothesis is true. In this study, there are four hypotheses constructed based on conceptual framework by using Multiple Linear

Regression (MLR) and Independent sample T-test as the statistical methods.

Table 3: Regression Model Summary of Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis	Variables	R ²	Beta	Sig.	VIF	Result
H1		.762				
	eWOM		.557	.000	1.920	Supported
	Trust		.282	.000	2.105	Supported
	Customer satisfaction		.112	.008	1.238	Supported
	Reputation		.049	.375	1.064	Not Supported

A multiple linear regression (MLR) analysis was conducted to the research to evaluate the predictors of attributes (trust, customer satisfaction, eWOM and reputation). Table 3 indicate that trust, customer satisfaction, eWOM and reputation for 76.2% at 95% confidence level as shown by R square value of 0.762. Reputation was not supported since P-values were higher than 0.05. Hence, reputation has no impact on loyalty on hotel industry. However, eWOM, trust, and customer satisfaction were supported (P-value 0.00) which indicates that eWOM, trust, and customer satisfaction have positive effect on loyalty. Thereby, H1 was partially supported. All VIFs were lower than 5, meaning that there was no multicollinearity problem.

Table 4: Regression Model Summary of Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis	Variables	R ²	Beta	Sig.	VIF	Result
H2		.691				
	eWOM		.672	.000	2.104	Supported
	Loyalty		.160	.000	2.028	Supported
	Brand attitude		.057	.124	1.110	Not Supported

A multiple linear regression (MLR) analysis was conducted to the research to evaluate the predictors of attributes (eWOM, loyalty and brand attitude). Table 4 indicate that eWOM, loyalty and brand attitude for 69.1% at 95% confidence level as shown by R square value of 0.691. Brand attitude was not supported since P-values were higher than 0.05. Hence, brand attitude has no impact on purchase intention on hotel industry. However, eWOM and loyalty were supported (P-value 0.000) which indicate that eWOM and loyalty have positive effect on purchase intention.

Therefore, H2 was partially supported. All VIFs were lower than 5, meaning that there was no multicollinearity problem.

Table 5: Independent sample test result of Hypothesis 3

	Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means				
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Equal variances assumed	5.187	.023	-.946	368	.345	-.05062	.05349
Equal variances not assumed			-.953	360.655	.341	-.05062	.05313

Table 5 shows independent sample test was conducted to evaluate the relationship between loyalty and nationality of respondents; Thai tourists and Chinese tourists. The independent variable is nationality of respondents; Thai tourists and Chinese tourists. The dependent variable is loyalty. The independent sample T-test showed the significance (2-tailed test) is equal 0.341, which is more than 0.05 ($.00 > .05$). It means the null hypothesis (Ho) failed to reject. Therefore, there is no statistically significant mean difference in expectation between Thai tourists and Chinese tourists with the condition of $t(360.655) = -0.953$, P-value = 0.341 at the 0.05 significant level.

Table 6: Independent sample test result of Hypothesis 4

	Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means				
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Equal variances assumed	1.691	.194	.613	368	.540	.03906	.06371
Equal variances not assumed			.615	367.977	.539	.03906	.06356

Table 6 shows independent sample test was conducted to evaluate the relationship between loyalty and nationality of respondents; Thai tourists and Chinese tourists. The independent variable is nationality of respondents; Thai tourists and Chinese tourists. The dependent variable is loyalty. The independent sample T-test showed the significance (2-tailed test) is equal 0.540, which is more than 0.05

(.00>.05). It means the null hypothesis (H_0) failed to reject. Then, there is no significant mean difference in expectation between Thai tourists and Chinese tourists with the condition of $t(368) = 0.613$, $P\text{-value} = 0.540$ at the 0.05 significant level.

Conclusion, Limitation, and Recommendations

Discussion and Implications

The purposes of this research were to investigate factors influence purchase intention on Thai and Chinese customers towards hotel industry in Bangkok. After the proposed hypotheses were tested, hypothesis one and two were rejected. However, Hypothesis three and four were not rejected. Thus, the result provided some discussion and implications that are as follows:

Based on the analysis of demographic factors from 400 respondents, the majority groups of respondents are Thai single female with 18-25 years old who are employee and had income between 20,001-50,000 baht per month. From this information, the results from hypothesis one to four implied mostly about this group of respondents.

According to the results of hypothesis one, three out of four attributes (trust, customer satisfaction, eWOM and reputation) were found to impact on loyalty. It means the null hypothesis was partially rejected. It shows that eWOM, trust, and customer satisfaction impact customer loyalty. The standardized coefficients (Beta) shows that eWOM has the impact towards customer loyalty at $\text{Beta} = 0.557$ followed by trust at $\text{Beta} = 0.282$, customer satisfaction at $\text{Beta} = 0.112$ and reputation at $\text{Beta} = 0.049$. Thus, eWOM was the most effective and important factor among trust, customer satisfaction, eWOM and reputation towards loyalty. Moreover, eWOM and loyalty influence purchase intention as the result from hypothesis two in hotel industry in Bangkok. Therefore, if

hotel want to improve their purchase intention, eWOM is the priority that the manager must focus on followed by loyalty, trust and customer satisfaction. For hypothesis three and four, the researcher found that there is no different between Thai and Chinese customers on loyalty and purchase intention in hotel industry in Bangkok. The results of this study are supported by previous studies as referred in the previous chapters that some variables were linked as can be seen from the proposed conceptual framework. The previous studied found that quantity and quality of eWOM have positive and direct effect on online repurchase intention. Some factors that customers will repurchase from an online store platform is perceived on vendor's eWOM and on perceived usefulness. Trust and perceived usefulness on website influence electronic word-of-mouth characteristics on online repurchase intention. Therefore, electronic word-of-mouth credibility, quality and quantity can affect online repurchase intention of customer in the different patterns. Customer satisfaction is important factors that effect on customer loyalty. Loyalty which develops to four phases is cognitive, affective, conative and action loyalties. Moreover, customer satisfaction show loyalty by repurchase product or services, suggesting products or services to others, and being less price sensitive (Anderson, Fornell, and Mazvancheryls, 2004). Customer loyalty is one precious factor of success company. Because loyal customers are economical to retain customer than new customer.

Conclusions

Although some group of consumers seek for the new travel experiences which leads to the rise of consumption of unique experience (Antoni, José and Fabiana, 2018), the number of tourists in Bangkok are getting lesser in number as mentioned in the previous chapter. This research was conducted based on the previous studies to develop a model of factors that impact

purchase intention towards hotel industry. The possible factors which lead to purchase intention were studied in this research including, eWOM, trust, customer satisfaction, reputation, brand attitude and loyalty.

The questionnaires were distributed in Bangkok from 10th June to 20th June 2019 to 400 respondents according to two main group of customers who were 200 Thai customers, 200 Chinese customers. The survey's distribution of respondents were 204 females and 196 males. Moreover, that the highest percentage of respondents' age was (130) of the group of respondents who age between 18-25 years old and other were (123) of the group of respondents who age between 26-30 years old, (89) of the group of respondents who age between 31-40 years old and (50) of the group of respondents who age between 41-50 years old and more than 50 years old (8) respectively. Furthermore, the largest number of participants' marital status group is single' which includes 292 respondents. The second largest group is Married (with children)' which equals 58 prospects. Next ones are Married (without children)' and 'Other which includes 45 participants and 5 participants respectively. In addition, the largest number of participants' income group is '20,001 – 50,000 Baht per month' which includes 201 respondents. The second largest group is 'Under 20,000 Baht per month' which equals 106 prospects. Next ones are '50,001-100,000 Baht a month' and 'Over 100,001 Baht a month' which includes 67 participants and 26 participants respectively. In addition, the largest group of occupation's respondents is 'employee' with 145 respondents. The smallest group is 'others' which includes 10 respondents.

The findings of the conceptual model revealed that eWOM, trust and customer satisfaction affected loyalty. eWOM and loyalty impacted on purchase intention as shown in the results of hypothesis one and two. According to hypothesis three and four, there are no

mean different between Thai and Chinese customer on loyalty and purchase intention in hotel industry in Bangkok, Thailand.

Recommendations

The findings of this study show that eWOM, trust and customer satisfaction affected loyalty. Ewom and loyalty impacted on purchase intention. This implied that hotel industry in Bangkok could increase the purchase intention such as returning to the hotel by increasing the linked factors which are electronic word-of-mouth, trust, customer satisfaction and loyalty. It has been confirmed to be valid in previous studies that eWOM includes of the positive talk, online recommendations, online reviews or online comment influence loyalty and purchase intention. It will be an important reference for a customer to build their purchase decision-making process. The findings of this research also support by previous studies conducted by Park et al. (2007), which studied that quality and quantity of reviews on websites significantly and positive influence purchase intention. Keh and Xie, (2009) found that trust bring long-term loyalty and increase the relationship between two parties. Trust comes before loyalty and it mediates the satisfaction–loyalty relationship (Hart and Johnson 1999). Some sources show evidence that intention and spending to purchase is increasing from Trust and loyalty of the company (Pavlou, 2003). Purchasing from online platform cannot be completed because of Lack of trust (Lee and Turban, 2001). However, Gefen and Straub (2004) suggest trust can be nourished by interaction. It will lead purchase intention to customers in the way of transaction intention or actual transactions.

On the other hand, the findings also indicated that there is no mean difference according to nationality of customer for different perspectives towards hotel industry in Bangkok. Thai customer and Chinese customer have no significant mean

difference between the two most important Thai tourist market in terms of loyalty and purchase intention. Results could probably be generalized to Thai tourist markets.

Further Study

This research lays on the solid theoretical fundamental, aims to achieve its objectives based on the appropriate identifies, and it is limited to conduct under the new integrated model. Hence, other models of purchase intention should be considered carrying on further studies. In fact, there are more variables that might influence purchase intention and loyalty such as emotional experience, information quality, interactivity and entertainment (Chaang-Iuan H., Pie-Chun L., 2015).

In addition, this study was conducted in the context of hotel industry in Bangkok, yet with the rapid growth and diversity of travel trend in other provinces in Thailand or other countries, it is possible to conduct the study with the different contexts in terms of areas or the other types of travel instrument such as tour package, tour guide or other types of accommodation.

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